

# The Polish National Catholic Church



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Gathered and Prepared by  
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## THE SYMBOL OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH



TRUTH      WORK      STRUGGLE

The Symbol of the Polish National Catholic Church summarizes in its outward form the substance of christianity.

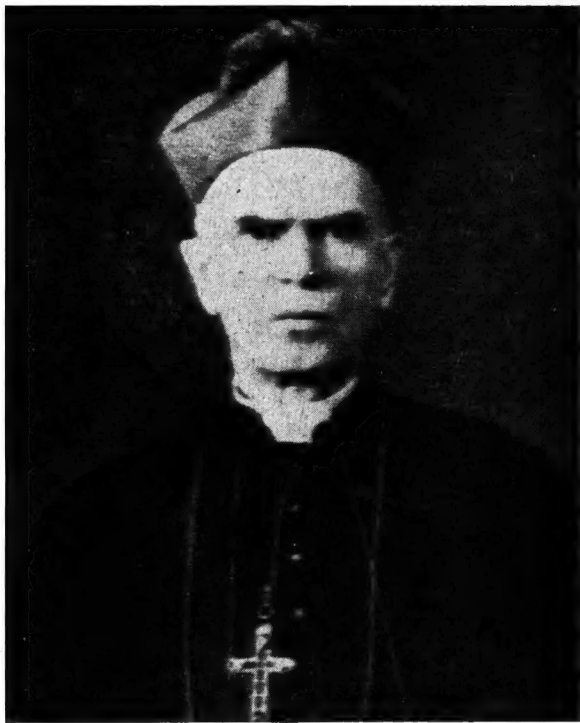
THE BOOK — represents the revealed Word of God.

THE SUN — is the sign of religious freedom and fervor.


THE CROSS — is the mark of suffering and consecration for others.

THE PALM — is the symbol of well earned peace.

We are to incorporate these christian principles in our lives by Truth, Work and Struggle.



*Prime Bishop Francis Hodur.*



The Polish National Catholic Church is a religious body organized in the United States in 1897 and ministers to people of Polish birth or parentage. It has an episcopal form of government and is conducted under a constitution which provides for the sharing in its management by the laity together with the clergy. The Polish National Catholic Church, entering upon its 54th year of existence, is little known to our American friends and neighbors. What are its tenets? What caused its birth? What is its purpose? Such questions are often asked, and it is the purpose of this article to answer them, so that we may become better known and understood.

The whole history of religion is a tapestry, into which is woven man's quest in seeking God, and the significance of his own existence. The tragedy has been that the religious institution built with his hands to contain the aspirations of his soul, has all too often disappointed man by following the letter and neglecting the spirit of religion.

However, there is a Church which has existed since the day when the Nazarene spoke of a Heavenly Father to whom all could come in

the spirit of love and truth. Its history is bound up with the lives of the apostles, and martyrs, of the countless men and women who have lived their lives in the light of His holiness. Oftentimes its saints have been called heretics and burned at the stake for their convictions. But always they have been lovers of the truth! The great work they were doing in His name, their devotion and example kept religion alive in the hearts of men. They were the builders of The Indestructible Church.

The Polish National Catholic Church is a part of that One Indestructible Church which began some 2,000 years ago when Jesus Christ commissioned His Apostles to go into the world, teaching all nations under the guiding power of the Holy Spirit.

By the ninth century, the Gospel had reached the Slavic people who were later to become the Polish Nation. Indeed, the coming of Christianity marked a new era for these independent and scattered Slavic people. The missionaries in this region, Cyril and Methodius, had given these people their first common Slavic alphabet, which strengthened their unity. Further, Cyril and Methodius had translated the Holy Scripture into this common language and conducted worship in that tongue. Christianity was accepted by the Slavic people as a national religion, as the Church of a people united by

language and the spirit of brotherhood. With a growing religious and national consciousness, Poland emerged to take her place in the family of nations.

## POLAND'S "CONVERSION" AND REFORMATION

The unity of the new nation was by no means complete. Apart from the internal problems of organization, dangers from without threatened the very existence and independence of the country. The Germanies, under Otto, the Great, had already incorporated other Slavic nations into the Holy Roman Empire. Germany's alliance with the Church of Rome gave a religious pretext to her invasions.

The Poles realized that Rome would be the most effective safeguard of their nationality, the most valuable weapon against aggression or assimilation by powerful neighbors. Accordingly, Mieszko accepted Roman Catholicism in 965, studiously avoiding mediation.

We are ignorant of what were Mieszko's real religious sentiments. In any case, he had understood that this religious alliance would eliminate at least one pretext for German intervention.

To know the Church-State relationship during this period of European history is to know that further changes were inevitable. As political upheavals sapped the strength of sovereigns,

the Church grew stronger in temporal power and influence. In Poland, the original Slavic liturgy was tolerated at first but soon was replaced by Latin, however, it was continued in the Church of the Holy Cross at Kleparz, in the environs of Cracow until 1506. In most of Europe, Latin became the official and literary language. Individual nations became little more than members of that larger state—the Church of Rome.

Generations passed; the Poles remained ever faithful to their Christian heritage, but more and more they found it necessary to resist encroachments and claims of the Papacy. The memory of the Slavic, national church was intensified by the spirit of religious unrest that was sweeping over Europe. Men began to talk openly about a Church which would concern itself with the spiritual welfare of the people and not with foreign and selfish interests.

The 16th century witnessed the "Golden Age" of Polish literature. It is significant that the contemporary authors, writing in the language of the people, spoke out against the abuses of the nobility and clergy. Men like Jan Laski, Nicholas Rey, Jan Kochanowski, Modrzewski, and others wrote boldly about the need for Church reform.

This spirit found many supporters even among the clergy. Under the reign of Sigismund August, there was a definite effort to

emancipate the Church in Poland from papal jurisdiction. Archbishop Uchanski of Posen, Primate of Poland, vigorously supported that idea of Church reform. The same causes which helped the reformation in other lands were also operative in Poland, since the geographical situation of Poland favored the spread of influences from Western Europe. From the direction of Bohemia, the Hussite movement was a great influence, for many of Hus' followers expelled from their own country, took refuge in Poland. Students returning from Prague, were fired by Hussite ideas.

The new ideas spread chiefly among the nobles and some of the higher clergy, the universities and to some extent among the townspeople. However, the peasants and country clergy remained unaffected.

In other countries, the Reform movement came to fruition, but in Poland the tide was stemmed by the coming of the Jesuits. Their methods for combatting opponents were not always praiseworthy, but they were effective.

Poland also fell prey to her neighbors. Her dismemberment between Russia, Prussia and Austria was to have marked national oblivion. Ideals and hopes were all that remained, but these were the seeds from which happiness and freedom were to grow and flourish again.



## NEW HOPE IN THE NEW WORLD

It was natural that the Poles, after heroic but unsuccessful struggles to liberate their country and shed alien rule, should seek new homes outside their native land. Some were forced to flee from their homes because of religious and political persecution, some left because they refused to serve in the armies of the annexers, others migrated to find new life and opportunity. Like the Pilgrims before them, the greatest number came to the friendly shores of the United States.

There were Poles in this country throughout the colonial period. We read about them in the histories of Virginia and New Amsterdam. Some came as soldiers with Kosciuszko and Pulaski to help the colonists gain the independence they desired so much for their own homeland. Economic necessity brought others to industrial New England and the agricultural West.

In the early years of the 19th century, an increasing stream of immigrants reached these shores. During the decade preceding the First World War, nearly a million Poles came to America. Here, their dream of freedom and opportunity became a reality. They brought with them, and perpetuated, their traditional customs and manners, adding them to the beauty and wealth of the mosaic culture that is America's. They sought to earn citizenship in this new land

and taught their children to respect the duties it imposed. It is agreed by fair-minded observers, that these Poles were good citizens—industrious, thrifty, peaceful and law-abiding.

The man who came from Poland was more than likely to be Roman Catholic in faith. His religion penetrated to the innermost fibers of his being. It was an intense, personal belief. Yet at the same time, the Church symbolized more than a creed.

The parish of a typical Polish village was the center of community life. Here he came to pray with his family, relatives, and neighbors. Here he would often join with others to sing music that was half-popular, half-liturgical; the peculiarly Polish Christmas carols, the "Kolen-da" or the tragic "Gorzkie Żale" Lamentations in memory of Christ's Passion. Here he would participate in the community activities and festivals. His Church, his religion, was an integral part of his daily life.

But this religious heritage was not without disturbing elements in the New World.

In Poland, the parish priest was highly influential in his sphere. He had absolute control over the spiritual and economic affairs of his parish and was in no way responsible to his flock. During the 19th century, however, some of the people turned from submission to chal-

lenge. The old order was changing. The people became imbued with an urge for advancement, a desire to rise in the social scale and to assume a more active, more positive role in the affairs of their parish. When many of the priests tended to unite with the nobility in defense of the old servile order, friction and bitterness between Church and people developed.

Here in America, the immigrants sought to recreate the parish and community life they had known in the old country. At the turn of the century, there were nearly 200 Polish parishes scattered through the United States, and the demand for new parishes far outstripped the Church's willingness or ability to create them.

To establish a church of their own, Poles had to secure the bishop's approval and accept the pastor he appointed. But this recognition was often not too easily attained. The bishop of the diocese was likely to be unsympathetic to "foreignism".....Then, too, the neighboring pastors were likely to be opposed to the idea of a rival new parish.

The Poles reacted vigorously to the situation. In their eyes, the Roman Catholic Church in America was a strange institution dominated by hostile men who would not recognize their needs.

Moreover, the ownership of church buildings fostered further misunderstandings. In Poland

such property was traditionally regarded as the moral property of the parish and the physical property of God with the priest serving as God's appointed administrator. Thus, when the immigrants—through toil and sacrificial offerings—erected their houses of worship, they were willing to allow pastors and bishops to have title to the churches simply because they regarded these clerics as managers and not owners. When they realized that the clergy claimed arbitrary control over property built and maintained by the people, the disillusioned parishioners found new cause for resentment.

This was due primarily to the resolutions of the Third Plenary Council of the Roman Catholic Church held in Baltimore, Md., in November, 1884. At this Council it was resolved, that hereafter, all church property automatically becomes the sole possession of the bishops of the various dioceses. This resolution was very unjust to the Polish people, for there were no Polish bishops in America. It permitted an unlawful encroachment upon their right to private ownership and paved the way for the political and social exploitation of the Polish people.

There were also other areas of friction.

The attitude of the Irish-German dominated hierarchy betrayed little concern for the welfare of the Polish immigrant. He seemed to be relegated to the status of a second-rate member in



the Church with no right — only obligations, with no jurisdiction—only submission.

In an effort to find sympathetic leadership within the Church, demands were raised that a fair share of Church honors be awarded to Polish-American clergymen. That these demands for representation were ignored, be it noted that as late as 1928, in an address delivered in Chicago, Ill., Ignace Paderewski was moved to bewail the continuous pressure upon Polish Catholics to surrender their traditional forms of worship. Again, members of the Polish-American Council meeting in Buffalo, N. Y., in 1944, representing the Polish population in America, issued a public appeal to the Roman hierarchy for proportional representation of the Polish clergy in the higher offices of the Church.

Even at this time, there are only seven Polish Roman Catholic Bishops in the United States, of these, six are suffragans and only one is in charge of a diocese which is predominantly non-Polish.

Here and there, discontent blazed into an open revolt. Mass upheavals were quite general in large Polish communities as in Chicago and Buffalo. The roots of resentment had grown deep and the people had no alternative except to assert themselves, even under penalty of excommunication.

## THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH EMERGES

It is necessary to turn to Scranton, Pennsylvania, for the main story of religious freedom. Chicago and Buffalo, which united with the Polish National Catholic Church in 1907 and 1914, occupy an important place in the history of separatism from the Church of Rome, but the united Polish National Catholic Church was a direct outgrowth of the Scranton movement.

Within a few years after its founding, the Scranton story was reechoed through Pennsylvania and the Northeast. The Pennsylvania movement developed its own laws, established certain unique religious procedures and formed a definite program of action and growth.

It created its own press to ward off Roman Catholic attacks and to win the support of the people; it established a seminary to assure the perpetuation of its priesthood, and founded a mutual benefit society—Spójnia—to serve the needs of its communicants. It rapidly became an expanding force and assumed the leadership for religious independence.

The organization of the Scranton parish, and the development of the Polish National Catholic Church, is inseparably linked with the life, and work of Prime Bishop Francis Hodur. As the first leader and active head for over half a

century, Bishop Hodur was the founder of its early publications and of the many social welfare activities that extended and aided the growth of the Church.

Francis Hodur was born on April 2, 1866, in the village of Zarki near Cracow in Poland. This son of poor parents living in a semi-feudal country was able to surmount the barriers of class and gain a remarkable broad education. He chose priesthood as his vocation and began his preparation at the Seminary and University of Cracow. Here he won minor orders and continued his studies at the Jagiellon University.

The Polish immigration to America and the subsequent need for Polish priests brought him to these shores. Bishop William O'Hara of Scranton accepted the young cleric into Saint Vincent's Seminary at Betty, Pennsylvania, and ordained him on August 19, 1893.

Following his ordination, Father Hodur was assigned to the Sacred Heart Parish in Scranton, as assistant to the Reverend Richard Aust. During the 18 months as curate of this parish, he actively participated in social work and published one of the first parish papers in this part of the country. His personal contacts with the members of the parish and his concern for their welfare endeared him to the hearts of the people.

The Sacred Heart Church in Scranton, was

an imposing building, erected by the generous and often sacrificial offerings of the anthracite miners and factory workers who comprised the parish. In the Autumn of 1896 a parish delegation visited the pastor, Father Aust, with the request that the laity be allowed representation in the management of parish affairs. The request was denied in so severe and peremptory a manner, that the delegation was stunned. Adding to the hurt, a message from the bishop reached these people, reproving them for what he termed their disobedience.

Unwilling to withdraw their request without a fair hearing, the people continued to petition their priest and bishop.

Unhappily, matters grew steadily worse, and on a September Sunday in 1896, a large group of members formed a line at the church entrance to prevent Father Aust from entering. Father Aust notified his diocesan bishop, who in turn called upon the Scranton police to handle the situation. This provoked a storm of resentment which culminated in the use of physical force and a riot developed. Fifty-two persons were arrested after the disturbance and given sentence of varying severity. The disillusioned and disheartened parishioners realized that the church was no longer theirs, either in the literal or figurative sense.

Within weeks, the alienated group decided

to organize a new parish with a more understanding pastor. During the next five months, the members of the new congregation, who had received no sign of approval or recognition from Bishop O'Hara, made plans for the erection of their church.

The troubled people sent their representatives to Father Hodur—now pastor of the Holy Trinity Church in Nanticoke—for counsel and advice.

This step proved to be of decisive importance to the future of their Church. Father Hodur, after hearing their story, said: "Let all those who are dissatisfied and feel wronged in this affair set about organizing and building a new Church, which shall remain in possession of the people themselves. After that we shall decide what further steps are necessary." Acting on his advice, they purchased a tract of land just around the corner from their former parish in Scranton. There they soon completed the foundation of the new Church building and requested Father Hodur to come to Scranton as their spiritual leader.

For the young priest, the request provoked a tremendous crisis. To accept the leadership of an unrecognized group in defiance of the bishop, was to court disaster. Yet on Sunday evening, March 14, 1897, he took charge of the new parish.

On the following Sunday, he celebrated mass in the crypt of the uncompleted Saint Stanislaus Church, thus beginning his life long service with the Scranton flock, as priest and later as bishop.

After that first service, a meeting was held and the Constitution of the new Church, which Father Hodur had prepared at their request, was read. More than 250 families formally united with the new parish and pledged their loyal support and cooperation.

The program of the new movement was based on the following principles:

- 1.—*The Polish people shall be in control of all churches built and maintained by them.*
- 2.—*The Polish people shall have the right to administer the church property, through a committee chosen by their own parish.*
- 3.—*The Polish people shall have the right to choose their own pastor.*

Scarcely five months after the celebration of the first mass in the basement of the unfinished St. Stanislaus Church, the movement leaped beyond Scranton, and began its march through the Pennsylvania anthracite fields. Encouraged by the success of the new parish, other groups of Polish Roman Catholics turned away from the papal fold and looked toward Scranton for an end to their varying grievances.



*St. Stanislaus Church in 1897.*

Strenuous efforts were now brought into play by the hierarchy of the Roman Church, to combat the threat of further defections. The monastic orders were called in to deal with the situation. These made the ancient appeal to the fear of the people. Social and economic pressure was applied. Slandorous tactics were used in an effort to discredit many of the individuals. The brand of "heresy" was wielded; whereupon Father Hodur began a weekly paper for the new church called "Straż." (The Guard). The first edition appeared in April, 1897. He was always alert to the possibilities of the printed word and the new paper gave him ample opportunity to voice his views on the Church and its true relation to the Roman See, as well as to give information about the Church. His convincing words and writings gave vast encouragement to the harassed people.

The pastor of St. Stanislaus' Parish was not yet convinced, that the position of the American hierarchy was entirely in accord with the principles of the Vatican concerning this matter. Having exhausted the methods of appeal available in the United States, he turned to the Vatican for succor and recognition.

Father Hodur appeared in Rome on February 18, 1898, and there set forth the whole matter before Cardinal Ledochowski and Vanatelli. But his petition and p'leas that American Poles

be permitted any special form of parish organization, or any lay control of their property other than decreed by the Baltimore Council, was curtly rejected, and he was told that "the request is absolutely impossible."

Returning home the young priest received a letter from the Papal delegate Martinelli in Washington, officially confirming the statement made in Rome by Cardinal Ledochowski.

Father Hodur called a special parish meeting and gave an account of his unsuccessful mission. Only one reaction was possible, and that was voiced unanimously by the parish meeting; to continue steadfast in their faith, free from Roman jurisdiction.

Father Hodur then notified by letter the Papal delegate Martinelli, Bishops O'Hara, and Hoban of the decision and stand of the Scranton St. Stanislaus Parish, and that this parish is severing all relations with the Roman Catholic Church, and to be for all time, free of Roman jurisdiction.

On October 2, 1898, a sentence of excommunication was issued against Father Hodur and his people.

#### GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Even before the initial wave of organization had spent its force, these people made the first step in the direction of a positive policy of their own. On December 16, 1900—a crucial day in

the history of the Polish National Catholic Church—the members of St. Stanislaus parish resolved to break away from Roman tradition, by holding services in their native tongue.

Nine days later, on the Eve of Christmas, the walls of St. Stanislaus resounded for the first time to the mass sung in the Polish language.

The influence of the new parish gained headway through the valley so that a number of new parishes were organized during the next few years. An informal federation came into existence and the St. Stanislaus Parish Constitution became a model for other congregations.

In September, 1904, 147 clerical and lay delegates representing about 20,000 adherents in five states, assembled in Scranton and formally knit together almost two dozen scattered parishes into a new denomination, the Polish National Catholic Church. This first Synod was in large measure a constitutional convention. By vote of the Synod, Father Hodur was chosen as Bishop-elect and administrator of the Church. The Latin service books were ordered to be translated into Polish, and a Theological Seminary was to be established.

The Seminary was instituted soon after the first Synod, and was first located in Scranton, Pa. Then for a period of one year at Plymouth, Pa., and from 1906 in Scranton. The present



building at Cedar Avenue and Elm Street, was purchased in 1926 and was enlarged and completely renovated in 1950.

The Synod defined the purpose of the Church:

1.—*To sanctify people by introducing them to the living Christ.*

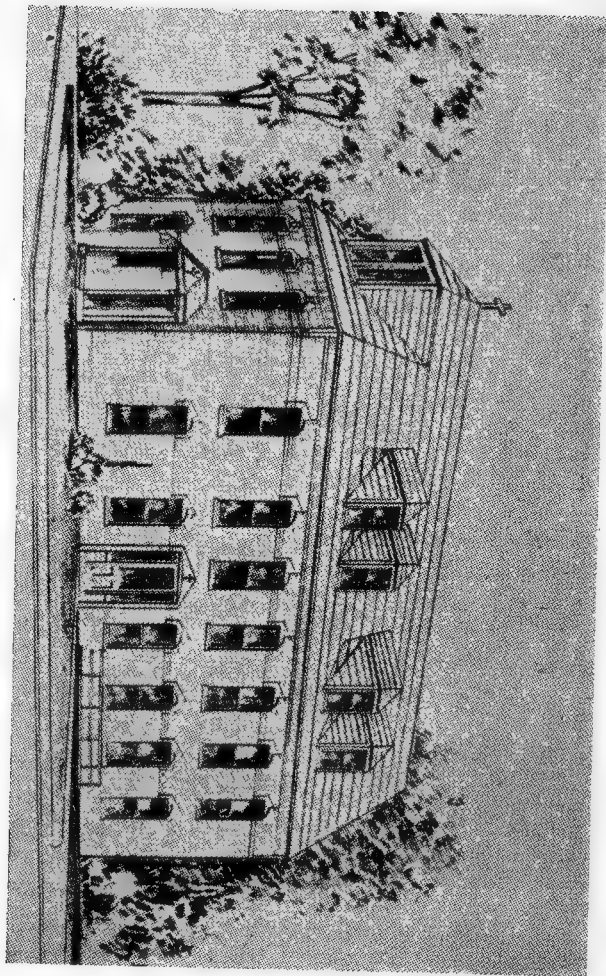
2.—*To preach the pure Gospel of Jesus, interpreting it with sound knowledge.*

3.—*To help mankind create a Church which, in living practice, would meet the standards of Jesus Christ.*

Those articles of the constitutional document which dealt with the organization and government of the Church had a decidedly American flavor. The source of sovereignty was declared to rest in each democratically organized parish, which owned, controlled, and administered all parish property. The parish selected its own pastor, it paid pastoral and other salaries, and had the right to elect to the General Synod one delegate for every 50 active members of the congregation.

Ultimate and virtually complete authority was handed to the Church's legislative body, the General Synod. The Constitution declared that "the General Synod interprets and defines the religious truths for the entire Church, elects candidates for bishops, enacts and repeals laws relating to discipline and administration, and

*Renovated Seminary Building.*



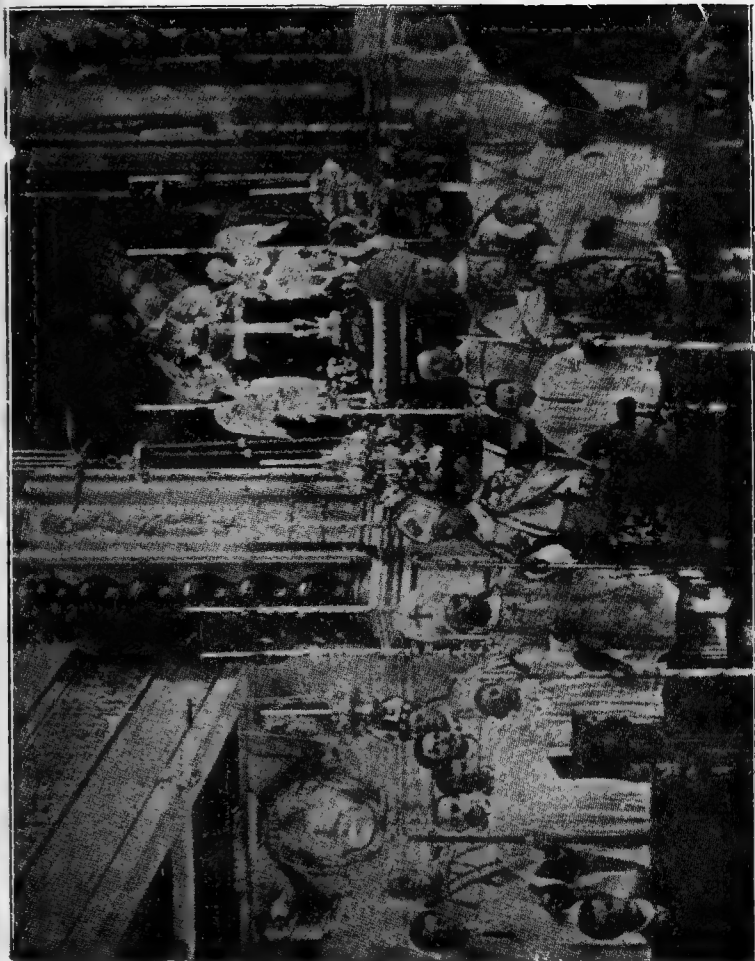
controls the spiritual and material affairs of the Church."

The First General Synod of 1904 gave unquestioned support to the ancient Christian concept of Apostolic Succession, according to which no man could legitimately exercise episcopal authority without receiving that authority from a bishop, who himself was in direct line of descent from the Apostles.

Consecration became a vital and pressing necessity in the Polish National Catholic Church and had to be decided in such a manner, that no one could doubt its authenticity: and so Father Hodur addressed himself to the See of Utrecht in Holland, to Archbishop Gerard Gul of the Old Catholic Church.

Father Hodur was consecrated on September 29, 1907, in Saint Gertrude's Cathedral in Utrecht, Holland. The consecrators were the Most Reverend Gerard Gul, Archbishop of Utrecht and head of the Old Catholic Churches of Europe; the Right Reverend John Van Thiel, Bishop of Haarlem; and the Right Reverend Michael Bartholomew Spit, Bishop of Deventer.

The Utrecht rite symbolized the establishment of Old Catholic intercommunion—a form of spiritual alliance between the American and European Churches, and the passing on of Apostolic Succession. Thereafter the American denomination followed its own course without fur-



*Consecration of Father Hodur.*

ther recourse to Europe for assistance. This outward symbol of the oneness of all Churches within the Christian Catholic Family, was demonstrated again in 1946, when the Polish National Catholic Church entered into Intercommunion with the Episcopal Church.

#### THE POLISH NATIONAL UNION

The Polish National Union was organized in 1908, and was an important factor in strengthening the bonds between the laity and the Church. This Union is a fraternal and insurance organ-



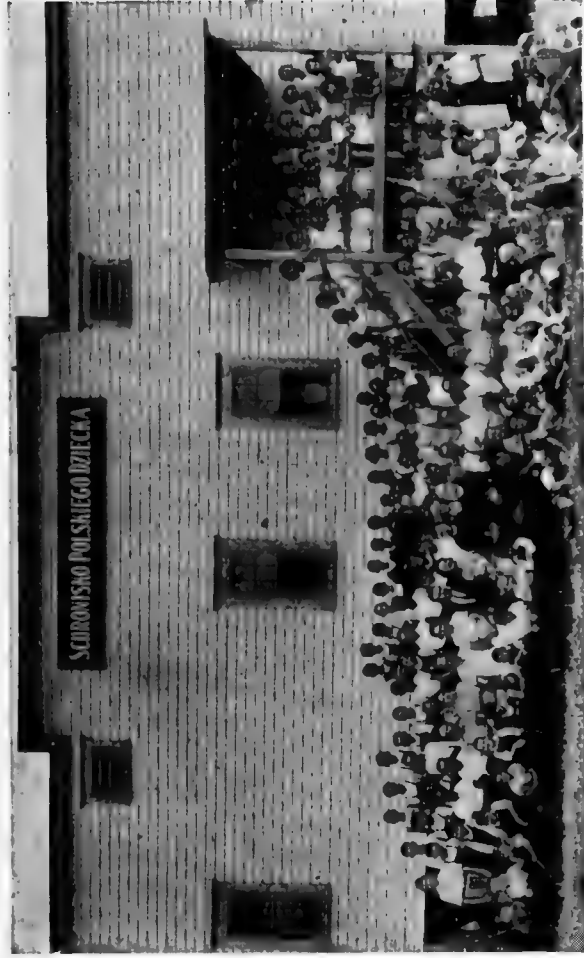
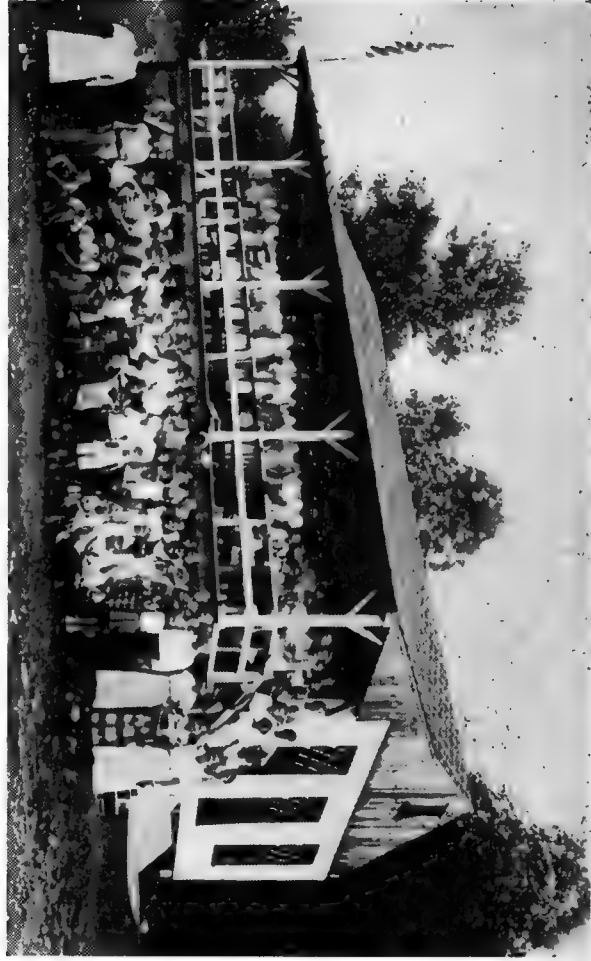
*Headquarters of the Polish National Union.*



*Spójnia Farm.*

ization. There was a very real need for such a society in the National Catholic membership, for those who had belonged to Roman Catholic Unions, found that on leaving their former

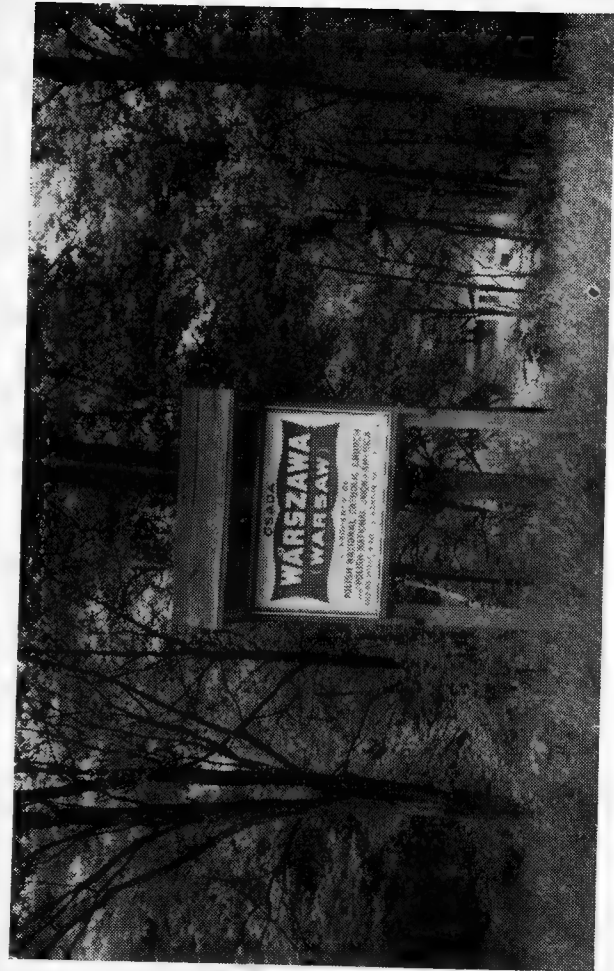
*Summer Camp Building at Spójnia Farm.*



*Summer Camp Building at Spójnia Farm.*

church, they forfeited all their insurance payments and the resulting benefits—the membership agreement of these organizations having a proviso to that effect. The chapters of the National Union are set up on parish lines and are adjuncts to parish life; but its members are not required to belong to the National Catholic Church in order to share in the insurance benefits. The Polish National Union at the present time is composed of 12 districts divided into 257 branches and over 30,000 members. In unison with the Polish National Catholic Church, a House for the Aged and Disabled was established at Spójnia Farm, Waymart, Pa., in July, 1929, with a resident chaplain. A part of this 400-acre farm is set aside for use as a children's vacation camp and is extensively used during Summer months. Two large buildings for this purpose were erected and are being maintained by the "Friends of the Polish School Societies." Another farm at Thornhurst, Pa., comprising some 900 acres with nine buildings is being prepared for the same purpose, as a home for the aged.

From the first years of its inception, the Polish National Union extended its interests to the social, educational, and humanitarian fields. It has given financial aid to many deserving students, published over 100,000 copies of various school books used by the parish Polish school



*Thornhurst Property named Warsaw.*



classes, and in many ways aids the youth of the Polish National Catholic Church in their organizational activities.

### THE WIDENING HORIZON

By this time the membership of the Church had trebled. New parishes appeared in New England, Minnesota and Missouri. Had this membership been concentrated in a specific geographical area, Bishop Hodur could have administered the Church without assistance; but the parishes were, in fact, scattered over a radius of 1,500 miles. To meet this new problem of administration, Prime Bishop Hodur consecrated as additional Bishops, four clergy elected by the Synod of 1921, The rite was performed at St. Stanislaus Cathedral in Scranton on August 17, 1924.

The new Bishops were: Leon Grochowski, Francis Bonczak, Valentine Gawrychowski, and John Gritenas.

In acting alone as Consecrator, Prime Bishop Hodur looked upon the situation as one of emergency; such as the See of Utrecht had had on more than one occasion to meet. He was also aware of the fact, that the Roman Catholic episcopate in the United States originated in such a consecration, for John Carroll, the first Amercian Roman Bishop, had been consecrated at Lulworth Castle Chapel in England, by Bishop

Charles Walmesley, acting alone; and in like manner, Bishop Carroll consecrated alone his assistant, Bishop Leonard Neale.

As a result of the increased episcopal supervision, the Church grew still more rapidly during the following years.

In 1925, a large group of Slovaks seceded from their Roman Catholic Church in Passaic, N. J., and asked Bishop Hodur to bless their new church building. Later, Slovak parishes in Perth Amboy and Newark, N. J., McKees Rocks and Braddock, Penna., joined the affiliation. Lithuanian parishes in Scranton, Pittsburgh, and Wilkes-Barre, Penna., and in Lawrence, Mass., entered the fold. The Church had been sought out by these groups as the religious body most in accord with their ideals.

During the formative years, the Church expended much of its strength and energy on the organically related tasks of organization and the struggle for survival. Nevertheless, the Church engaged in a variety of peaceful activities. The Church press was expanded. The weekly "Straż" became in 1923, the organ of the Polish National Union and "Rola Boża" (God's Field) was thereupon started by Bishop Hodur as a purely Church paper. An ever mounting number of pamphlets, prayer books, catechisms, church calendars, and year books streamed from its own printing plant.



*Four New Bishops with Prime Bishop Hodur as Consecrator.*



## THE MISSION TO POLAND

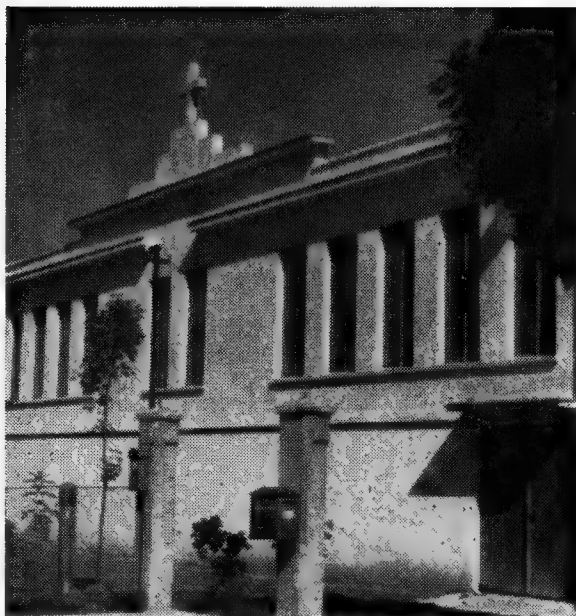
The Poland of 1920 was a new nation built upon the ruins of the Hohenzollern, Hapsburg, and Romanov empires and organized as a theoretically democratic republic.

Immediately after the First World War, the Church had energetically plunged into the work of war relief. The aid which reached Poland through the agency of the Church created an unprecedented interest in the Church itself. Consequently, when in 1919 Father Bronislaw Krupski was sent to Poland to supervise relief work, he was authorized by the Prime Bishop and Church Council to undertake the work of starting a mission.

Though he and his successors accomplished their task, they did so in the face of crushing disabilities and incessant persecution.

Prime Bishop Hodur made his first trip to Poland with Bishop Leon Grochowski, for the purpose of furthering this missionary work in 1920 and in all made 14 voyages. The first parish was established in Cracow in 1921.

From this small beginning and against great opposition from the Roman Church, the mission grew so that in 1922, the Rev. Francis Bonczak, as Bishop elect, was sent to Poland to administer the mission and to establish a seminary. He was



*Church Building, Cracow, Poland.*

consecrated in 1924 and headed the mission to 1927.

Theoretically, their freedom to preach was guaranteed by the liberal constitution of March, 1921; but in practice, this constitution proviso was unenforced. Poland was overwhelmingly Roman Catholic in faith and regarded the Amer-

ican missionaries and their followers with bitter, often violent hostility.

All through the postwar decade, the Church leaders risked arrest or assault in the performance of their work. Yet despite great obstacles, the Polish National Catholic Church took root in Polish soil.



*Rebuilt Seminary, Cracow, Poland.*

Before the Nazi invasion blighted the Church's growth, it claimed a membership of 50,000 people, organized in a diocese of 56 parishes under the leadership of Bishop Joseph Padewski.

From the outbreak of World War II until the end of the war, the Church in Poland went into eclipse. The Nazis seized many of the church buildings, and forbade any meetings. Bishop Padewski, was interned in Tittmoning, Bavaria, in 1944. During the occupation the clergy of the church suffered staggering losses; 17 priests, approximately one-third of the total number, were lost.

With the close of the war, the Church began a swift and remarkable revival. Material aid and a group of six missionaries came from the Church in America. Old parishes were restored, new ones organized, and the reconstruction of the Cracow seminary, destroyed during the war, was begun. Bishop Padewski returned to Poland in 1946.

By early 1950 there were 122 parishes in Poland, staffed by barely 70 priests.

#### FAITH AND PRACTICE

Today the Church finds itself stronger than ever before in its history, strong with a strength born of a struggle. Its strength is the faith of

its people, a faith that is put to test, even today for its loyalty to Christ.

In the terms of Saint Paul; Christ is the Head of this Church. Through Him we learn to worship and serve our Heavenly Father, and through Him are we saved.

Believing that the work of the Indestructible Church is reflected in the lives of great men and women, we honor the Blessed Mother of our Lord and the Host of Saints who have exemplified the teachings of Christ in their own lives.

Serving a Lord who said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," the Church makes us conscious of our goal of personal perfection, and gives us the faith in the life hereafter and comfort now in spiritual communion with God.

We know that our Church is something infinitely greater than a protest against the doctrines and dogmas of any authoritarian church; it is a living expression of positive ideals and principals. We are building not a new Church, but a Church that is closer to the spirit and teachings of Jesus.

That this Church has withstood the test of endurance, is not alone its reason for being. It was not built by the caprice of man, but by the Divine Will of God! This is the test of Christ's Church, a test recognized by Gamaliel when he spoke in behalf of the persecuted Apostles and said: "If this work be of men, it will be over-

thrown; but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them."

The doctrine of the Polish National Catholic Church is founded on the Holy Scripture, Holy Traditions, and four Ecumenical Synods of the undivided Church. This doctrine is expanded in the "Credo" (The Confession of Faith) as adopted by the General Synods and in the "Eleven Great Principles" of the Polish National Catholic Church.

The first and most important task of the Polish National Catholic Church, is the sanctification and salvation of the Polish people and all others in union with this Church. Man is sanctified when he follows the guidance of the Church, and uses the spiritual means which the Church received from God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus.

To bear the light of Jesus Christ before men, to bring constantly to our minds, that our purpose is a life in the spirit of God, in the spirit of truth, love, and righteousness, to help us grow like to Christ Himself through fulfillment of our duties to God, family, nation, and humanity—that is the appeal, the mandate and the purpose of the Polish National Catholic Church.

The True, Eternal Church is not the product of man's mind or hands. It is the living expres-



sion of God's Divine Will in the lives of men. Its foundation is faithful service in love and truth. Its growth is in the willingness of new generations to build upon this foundation.

### SACRAMENTS

Seven Sacraments are practiced in the Polish National Catholic Church, with Baptism and Confirmation being reckoned as one Sacrament—Confirmation being the completion of Baptism.

The Word of God heard and preached is proclaimed as a Sacrament, for it is the effectual working of the Word of God, that brings to man the Divine Word. Likewise, it is, through the Word of God, that one becomes united with Christ and in Him is reborn again. By this Sacrament the National Church exalts and enshrines the record and teachings of Christ, as the Living Word of God.

### LANGUAGE

The use of the Polish language in the mass and other services is a basic principle in the Polish National Catholic Church. The rites and ceremonies resemble those of the Roman Catholic Church, for most of the services have been retained; however, the Polish language is used in place of the Latin. Preaching in English is being introduced where needed, likewise the administration of Sacraments.

Parish schools are maintained in every parish and have a two-fold purpose: To teach the Polish language and to impart religious instructions. These are supplementary schools, holding classes after the regular public school hours, and on Saturdays. The teaching is usually done by the parish priest.

### CONFESSION

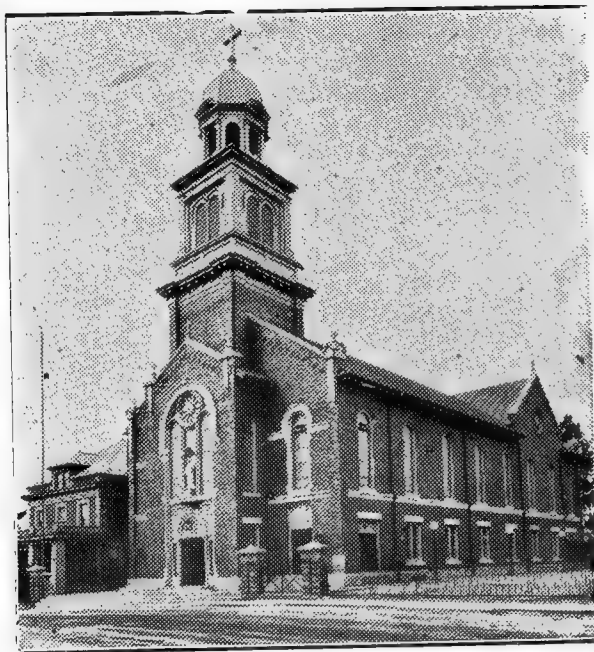
Two forms of confession are now in general use in the Polish National Catholic Church. Private or ear confession for children and young people to age 21, and a general public confession for adults.

### CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Legislative authority for the whole church is vested in the General Synod which meets every 10 years, and is composed of the Bishops, clergy, and lay delegates from each parish. Executive authority rests in the Prime Bishop and Church Council, which meets twice annually, and is composed of all the Bishops, five clergy, and five delegates elected at the General Synod.

In like manner, legislative authority for the diocese is in the diocesan synod which meets every five years.

Legislative authority for the parish is in the annual parish meeting.



*Renovated St. Stanislaus Church.*

## NATIONAL

The term national is used in the official title to proclaim that the Polish National Catholic Church recognizes the element of national culture and its development.

Christ did not found one international or-

ganization recognizing no nation; but rather a Universal Church recognizing each nation individually and embracing all nations without exception. God is the giver of all languages.

## LIST OF BISHOPS

With Order of Consecration.

The Most Reverend Francis Hodur, Scranton, September 29, 1907.

The Right Reverend Leon Grochowski, August 17, 1924, Chicago, Ill.—Western Diocese.

The Right Reverend Francis Bonczak, August 17, 1924.

The Right Reverend Valentine Gawrychowski\*, August 17, 1924.

The Right Reverend John Gritenas\*\*, August 17, 1924.

The Right Reverend John Z. Jasinski, June 7, 1928. Buffalo, N. Y.—Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese.

The Right Reverend John Misiaszek, August 26, 1936. Scranton-Central Diocese.

The Right Reverend Joseph Padewski, August 26, 1936. Cracow, Poland.

The Right Reverend Joseph Lesniak, November 16, 1937. Springfield, Mass. — Eastern Diocese.

\*Died February, 1934.

\*\*Died December, 1929.

## CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH.

1. I BELIEVE in Almighty God, the cause of all existence, a Being Whose spirit permeates the universe, and is the source of its life and development, both material (physical) as well as spiritual and moral. In relation to man, God reveals Himself by His creative power, His inexpressible wisdom, His provident influence on the formation of the destiny of individual man, of nations, states, and all mankind. In a more particular way, God as the Spirit of Life, Light and Goodness, influences chosen spirits of nations, who in given epochs of human development, are creative agents in the building of God's Kingdom on earth. This direct influence of God is not limited to any one nation or epoch, but is directed to all nations and times, for the purpose of bringing life, development, and attainment of the highest degree of culture of individual nations, states, and mankind; it is the emanation of Divine forces acting upon humanity, and of the profiting from these forces by individuals, nations, states and all mankind.

2. I BELIEVE in Jesus Christ, the Savior and Spiritual Regenerator of the world. I believe that Christ, our Lord, was the Messenger of God, of one substance with Him, and as to humanity begotten of the humble woman Mary. I

believe that this Nazarene Master revealed His Divine Mission on earth by His life, an unsurpassed ideal of goodness, wisdom, and sacrifice for others, especially for sinful and disinherited people, that by His work, His teaching and martyrdom, He became the glowing ember of a new life of mankind, a life taking its beginning, strength, and fullness in knowledge of God, in loving Him, and in fulfilling His Holy Will.

3. I BELIEVE, that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, rules the world in the natural as well as in the moral order; that all the laws of the universe and those by which the soul of individual man, as well as mankind as a whole is guided, are an emanation of the will, goodness and righteousness of the Divine Being.

4. From the Holy Spirit flows grace, that is an invisible inner power, which brings it to pass, that when a man co-operates with it, and works in harmony with it, he becomes better, more perfect, better fitted for his tasks, a participant in the peace of soul and heart, until one day he finds infinite bliss, and the fulfillment of his own being in union with God in eternity.

5. I BELIEVE, in the need of uniting all followers of Christ's religion into the one body of God's Church; and that the Church of Christ, Apostolic and Universal, is the expression of this Divine congregation of mankind which the Saviour proclaimed, for the establish-

ment of which all noble people have worked and are working, and for which the soul of man yearns, desiring truth, light, love, righteousness and comfort in God.

6. I BELIEVE, that the Church of Christ is the true teacher, both of individual man and all human society; that it is a steward of Divine graces and is a guide and a light in man's temporal pilgrimage to God and salvation, in so far as the confessors and members of this Church, both lay and clerical, are united with the Divine Founder by faith and life proceeding from this faith.

7. I BELIEVE, that every righteous Christian should take an active and living part in the spiritual life of the Church; by heeding the Word of God, by receiving of the Holy Sacraments, by fulfilling the rules and precepts established by Christ and His Apostles, defined and given to us by the Church.

8. I BELIEVE, that all people, as children of one Father, God, are equal in themselves; that privileges arising from differences in rank, from possession of unlimited wealth, or from differences in faith, sex and race, are a great wrong, because they are a violation of the rights of man which he possesses by his nature and by the dignity of his Divine origin, and are a barrier to the purposeful development of man.

9. I BELIEVE, that all people have equal rights to life to happiness, and to those ways and means which lead to the preservation of existence, improvement and salvation; but I also believe, that all people have sacred obligations toward God, themselves, their nation and state, and the whole of society.

10. I BELIEVE, in the ultimate justice of God, in life beyond the grave, which will be a continuation of temporal life; the degree and state of its perfection and happiness dependent upon our present life, and above all on the state of our soul in the final hour of death.

11. I BELIEVE, in immortality and eternal bliss, in the union with God of all people, generations and times, because I believe in the Divine power of love, mercy and justice; and for nothing else do I yearn, but that it may be to me according to my faith. Amen.

## THE ELEVEN GREAT PRINCIPLES OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH.

### 1. SPIRITUAL COMMUNION OF CHRIST WITH HIS BELIEVERS.

Christ our Lord established the Church for this purpose; that His believers might carry on the work begun by Him, the work of human salvation. The apostles and disciples, as well as their followers, were to prepare and lead hu-

manity into the Kingdom of God; assured that if they fulfilled this task, He would be with them. For He had promised them, saying, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." Mat. 18:20. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Mat. 28:20.

This presence of His, however, He made conditional. He would be with His disciples, if they would be gathered together and work in His Name, for His purposes, according to the plan indicated by Him.

He said to them. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men," Mat. 5:13. "Ye are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Mat. 5:16. "But be ye not called masters, or teachers for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on earth; for one is your Father, who is in heaven. Mat. 23:8; 9,

So if the members of the National Church will live according to these teachings of the Lord, our Master, and will propagate the democratic principles of Christ, they will be assured of His presence, help and co-operation. When we gather for common prayers, tasks, or efforts;

when we struggle for His holy Cause; He, our Master, Leader and Saviour, will sustain us. For our work is His work; our toil, His toil; our suffering, our tears, our persecutions and the final triumph of His ideal of a Divine Society, are His suffering, His tears, His persecution and the victory of a common ideal with Him.

"If ye abide in my Word (i.e., the program given by Me to you) then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. John 8:31-32.

## 2. THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH.

The most important task and mission of Jesus Christ, according to His own declaration and the words of His disciples, as recorded in the Gospels and documents of the first two centuries of our era—was the proclaiming and establishing of the Kingdom of God upon earth. From that moment when He returned from the wilderness, where He had suffered trials for 40 days and nights, and said to the multitudes, "Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," Mat. 4:17, until the time when, outstretched upon the cross, He whispered with His last breath, "It is finished," our Master the Nazarene served the mighty purpose of preparing humanity for the Kingdom of God upon earth.

The Apostles and their immediate followers

took up this appointed task, and for its sake suffered and died martyrs' deaths; but later generations forgot it, and became entangled in a system of Church politics directed from the Vatican. Official Christendom devoted itself to the unravelling of theological problems; to building magnificent cathedrals of stone, brick, gold and silver; and in curtailing human thought and freedom; serving the kings, lords and potentates of the world in general and forgetful of building a regenerated, living society, the Kingdom of God upon earth.

For this reason, there arose among the poor Polish immigrants in America, the Polish National Catholic Church, in order to remind the world and especially the Polish people, of that immortal and indispensable idea of organizing a Divine Society founded on love, heroic courage, cooperation, righteousness and brotherhood. "Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Christ has come nigh to us".

Repent, that you have wasted so much time, talents, strength of soul and body, in fratricidal struggle, extortion, mutual deception, trickery, treachery, trafficking in the holiest feelings and ideals. Cease from doing unrighteousness. Line up, begin a new period of your own life, of that of the Polish people and of all humanity. Go forth, and may all that the Eternal Wisdom has purposed, be fulfilled in you.

### 3. SALVATION THE CONDITION OF ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Religion is the living bond uniting man with God; it is the most powerful, noblest and holiest sentiment of man's heart and the highest flight of man's understanding. It arises in the mystery of the soul and is kept alive by faith, unbounded trust and good deeds toward fellow men.

No one should therefore, debase, or ridicule, or traffic in religion, or use it for his own personal ends. Whoever does this, exposes himself to the horrible consequences: his rejection by God and by humanity. History brands none so severely as those who traffic in God, virtue, faith and the Sacraments; brands them as blasphemers, perjurers, destroyers of sacred things and sacrilegious.

"Woe unto the shepherds," cries the great Israelite prophet to all those who abuse religion by making it serve their low, base and selfish ends, "who feed themselves." "Should not the shepherds feed the sheep? Ye eat the fat and ye clothe you with wool and ye kill the fatlings: but ye feed not the sheep. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have



ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And my sheep were scattered,, because there was no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field and were scattered. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord, which the Lord God saith: Behold, I am against the shepherds; and will require my sheep at their hands and will cause them to cease from feeding the sheep; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my sheep from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them. "Ezekiel 34:2-10.

Were not these prophetic words fulfilled in the course of human history, on the priesthood of Egypt, Judea and Rome? May they not likewise be fulfilled concerning the Polish priesthood of the Roman Church, if they turn not back from their course, in their faithlessness toward God? The same causes bring the same results. The same hand which wrote in the palace at Babylon, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin may likewise write down in Warsaw, Cracow, Poznan, Lwow, Lodz, Vilna and Czeszochowa, "Woe."

#### 4. LEADING A MAN INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The leading of a man into the Kingdom of God, that perfect state of human society for which mankind yearns and toward which it con-

stantly turns its steps, is called in the language of religion, a saving work or salvation.

According to the teaching of Christ our Lord, the Kingdom of Heaven is the condition of people united with God in His boundless love; surrendered completely to Him; living and working in co-operation with Him. In order to attain this state, a man must go through a long process of inward change; he must be spiritually regenerated and above all, be free from sin and its consequences.

Sin is misunderstanding of the being and purpose of God on the part of the individual man, the nation, even all humanity. For the effects of that lack of knowledge of God within him and of his denial of God the source of every life, are for man simply fatal, crushing. Left to himself in his own spiritual life, a sinful man does not only fail to develop or progress, but on the contrary retrogrades and becomes dwarfed in soul. For a while he vegetates and then becomes moribund and wastes away; and would necessarily perish, did there not come to him with help that Father Creator who desires not the death of a poor sinner, but rather that he be converted and live.

This He accomplishes through Jesus Christ. The saving work of God's Mediator depends on this: that He shows to fallen man the terrible consequence of sin; God's Divine compassion

and righteousness and that God's primary and final purpose is man's eternal bliss. He makes a bond uniting the Creator with man, who has so shattered to naught his life and disposes anew the moral relationship which will give him life. Man is a social being, not only in the sense that he lives with creatures similar to himself in a union of causation and must cooperate for the common good if he would profit by it; but also, in a higher and larger sense, that he is dependent on the First Cause of every being, on the Supreme Organizer of the Universe; being joined to Him by spiritual and moral ties, the natures of which are determined by his conscious existence, his degree of development and the final goal toward which he tends.

A man may not with impunity isolate himself from nature, his family, his people, nation, state, Church or God. Every such deviation brings about fatal and terrible consequences; above all, the severing of his relation with God. This produces in man a spiritual desert, which makes barren and discourages all that we call the beautiful, moral, creative and spiritual life of man; and fills him with the opposite impulses, toward a brutish, low and base life. Borne away on the whirlpool of bestial and inert living, man wallows lower and lower, soiling and polluting himself in the depths of shameless and evil doings; till he descends into an

abyss, at the bottom of which awaits him, either the complete decay of his humanity, despair, suicide, heinous crime or else something yet more dire: hell; Gehenna.

And then Christ saves him from extinction. He restores in him a sense of awe and of loathing; regret for his wasted life; longing for what is better and holier. He shows him the Divine mercy and righteousness and reveals to him his wretched heart; that its filth, poison, misery and despair may flow out and a ray of hope may enter in Divine Compassion, united with repentance, confession and resolve. With His hand of a Great Physician and Most Loving Friend, Christ binds up the wounds of the rescued man and restores him to the Church, family and nation; but above all, restores him his own self,—to God. He helps him to be saved forever.

For as the greatest privilege of man is salvation, so God's holiest right is to assist man in attaining salvation.

## 5. THE CHURCH AND ITS FOUNDATIONS.

The Church is an organized body of free religious people, who strive by the help of their organization to achieve life's highest purpose. Every religious act has to develop by man's free will; it must not yield in any way whatsoever to external compulsion. Religion and the Church as its exponent, must not be servants of

political parties, governments or the potentates of this world to combat the free aspirations of man or a nation toward liberty, but on the contrary, it is the obligation of the Church to inspire and to spiritually strengthen man in the struggle of life, in order to fulfill its mission to humanity as a whole.

#### 6. THE WORD OF GOD, THE GREAT SACRAMENT OF THE NATIONAL CHURCH.

A great Sacrament of Christ's—National Church, as set forth in the ideals of its Divine Founder, is the preaching and hearing of the Word of God.

God addressed mankind most plainly through Jesus Christ. When, therefore, a priest of the National Church takes from the treasury of Eternal Light, Strength and Life; when he repeats the Gospel of the Saviour in the self same spirit, as the great Mediator showed toward mankind; when he interprets, simplifies, extends and sounds its depths, according to the needs of the time, he is fulfilling the highest duty attainable by man, for he is proclaiming the will of God, eternal, holy and creative laws.

Likewise those who hearken worthily, confidently and sincerely to the Word of God, are united with their Divine Lord, are fellow workers with Him. Through such an act they be-

come reborn; they grow strong in their resolves; in all things their hearts are fixed, they are God's heirs of the Universe.

Christ our Lord proclaimed this power of the Word of God in these sayings: "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that hearth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life and shall not come to judgment; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. John 5:24-25.

#### 7. GOD IS LOVE AND THERE IS NO ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

We cannot conceive that God created man out of sheer caprice, nor selfishness, (as various theological systems, drawn up according to the model of present day political and social relations, interpret the matter) nor for the purpose of delivering him to the devils, for them to abuse him and treat cruelly, by physical and spiritual torment and torture; nor would He destroy, bring to naught and erase His own work, the child of His mind, love and power. Nay, he created man for this: that man should live his own life according to his Creator's likeness. Therefore man thinks and acts; therefore he yearns to possess more and more the sum total

of light, truth, love, creative energy and bliss. Man has had given to him the necessary powers and means for the attainment of these Divine purposes and a period of time sufficiently long for arriving at the appointed goal. Given that tendency, man is left by God with a free will: in order that his acts may have a moral value, so that he may of his own self, think, feel, act, save his own soul.

God did not create man perfect, but relatively weak; yet He infused man's being with a spark of longing for perfection; a sort of germ of eternal life, impulse, creative power. This makes man to go on through the centuries, from stage to stage, so that he continually climbs higher, develops and approaches perfection both as an individual and as the human species. Now, since man is not omniscient nor all powerful and does not know completely the laws that govern his physical and spiritual nature, he often deviates from the sure path of life. He goes astray, struggles, falls down; then arises with sorrow and considers the whole immensity of his physical, moral and spiritual experiences, till purified through these sufferings and struggles, through these creative thoughts, through toil and yearning, he enters upon the way of partial emancipation and then in due time, that of a freer, more perfected existence; till at last he becomes united with the goal of his life: God.

Some people attain this goal sooner, even in this temporal life; others later; some in a higher, others in a lower degree. It depends on the manner in which they make use of their Divine endowments of will, intellect, inspiration and of the mediations of Jesus Christ and His Church.

In the Holy Scriptures and especially in the New Testament books, we find numerous episodes which confirm the above hopeful view concerning the gradual development and final salvation of the individual man and of the whole of the human race. Expressions such as: eternal fire, undying worm, fiery place, mouths of hell, place of torment, outer darkness where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth, lake burning with fire, full of brimstone and pitch and similar phrases, are expressive illustrations, having the purpose of picturing the greatness of guilt and punishment for sinners; but were not meant to indicate hell in the Roman Catholic sense of the term. Neither were the pagan peoples nor the Jewish synagogue acquainted with such an eternal hell as the Roman Catholic Church teaches; nor were the Christians of the first centuries,—not until the time when in the year 1215, the fourth General, Lateran Council finally decided that “the wicked receive from the devil eternal punishment; but the good, from Christ eternal glory.”

Christ our Lord, speaking to the Jewish peo-

ple, made use of their language, employing phrases and imagery familiar to their minds, that He might appeal to their imagination, understanding and feelings. Thus, in order to point out to these people the greatness of sin and its punishment, by choosing an example of this sort, He compares that punishment to Gehenna. Now Gehenna, was a place near Jerusalem, where in former times sacrifices had been made to the Syrian god Moloch; it was later used for burning the city refuse, so that over it rose continually black clouds of smoke mingled with fiery red flames and from it issued fetid and suffocating fumes; so that it was a place of horror and oppressiveness.

The Greek adjective *aionios*, used by the Evangelists with the word Gehenna, does not mean everlasting, but long lasting, i.e., lasting through a certain time or period, through a future age, a future time. So when the Lord Jesus presented the consequences of transgressions, He did not say that they would be everlasting, for ages and ages; but He wished to make plain that those consequences would assuredly befall sinners in the future and that they would be of a severe and grave character.

His teaching concerning the salvation of All humanity is corroborated by the following texts of Holy Scripture:

"Now is the judgment of this world; now

shall the prince of this world be cast out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." John 12:31-32. "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Luke 3:6.

"Whom (Jesus Christ) the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:21.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits and afterwards they that are Christ's, at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall render the Kingdom to God the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. And when all things shall have been subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also be subject to Him that put all things under Him: that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. 15:22-28.

#### 8. NATIONS, AS GOD'S ONE FAMILY ON EARTH.

Nations are members of one great family of God on earth. Hence it is not right for one nation to rob another nation of land, their political, religious and social freedom, their right to create a native culture; just as it is not right

for one man to rob another of his property, his good name, freedom of conscience, and the pursuit of happiness, insofar as that pursuit does not interfere with the common good. The right to live and develop is the highest of all rights.

#### 9. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE FEDERATION OF NATIONS.

The Kingdom, or Society, of God, for which Jesus Christ laid the foundations, is to be a federation of all free nations of the earth, conceived as one mighty ideal of brotherhood, cooperation and justice. The fulfillment of one's obligations toward God, nation, government, family, self and toward individual members of society is the best regulator for that living mechanism called Man, or collective humanity.

#### 10. RELIGIOUS RITES IN THE POLISH LANGUAGE.

All religious rites in the Polish Church and the Polish home should be conducted in the Polish language; since they are the outward manifestations of the relation of the Polish soul and Polish people to God. Christ spoke to God His Father in Syro-Chaldean, that is, in the language of His own people; He ministered in this tongue the Holy rite at the Last Supper and at the final moments of the most dreadful tragedy that ever took place on this earthly sphere; He cried out

to God—likewise in the speech of His own people, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!"

Why then should Polish priests, followers of Jesus Christ the Lawgiver, show disdain for the marvelous Polish speech, the language of a great immortal people; and interpose between a Polish soul and God the alien Latin tongue, the language of a dead people?

#### 11. THE PEOPLE OWN ALL CHURCH PROPERTY.

The owners and controllers of National Church property are the Polish people who build, maintain and believe in that Church. Bishops and priests are its guardians with the consent of the people.

The first National Church was established in America in the City of Scranton, Penna., in the year 1897: supported on one hand by God's Gospel proclaimed to the world by Jesus Christ; and on the other, by Polish working people who thirst for truth and righteousness.

The above principles comprise in themselves the substance of God's Revelation given to man through the prophets, through Jesus Christ our Lord and His disciples. These are sufficient for a knowledge of the way of God and of the obligations of religion and salvation, for the individual soul and for the whole nation as well.

*Prime Bishop Francis Hodur—1923.*



The Polish National Catholic Church entered into Intercommunion with the Episcopal Church by action of its Seventh General Synod held in Scranton, Pa., October 15-18, 1946.

A special advisory Committee on theological, canonical and practical questions arising from this new relationship was appointed by both the above mentioned Churches. The first joint meeting was held at the Episcopal Cathedral in Albany, New York, on June 27, 1947, the second at the National Catholic Cathedral in Buffalo, New York, January 14, 1948, the third in Pittsburgh, Pa., by invitation of Bishop Austin Pardue and the fourth in Chicago, Ill., by invitation of Bishop Leon Grochowski. It may be pointed out that the two Churches are dealing with a situation that has never before existed. They are two National Churches which, maintaining the doctrine and fellowship that have come down to them from the Apostles, find themselves in the same territory through immigration combined with the barrier of language. Brought together through the agreement between representatives of the Anglican and of the Old Catholic Churches made at Bonn, Germany, in 1931, they now desire to make this new relationship a source of strength to each Church and of increasing fellowship between them. This Intercommunion is based on the following three points:

1. Each communion recognizes the Catholicity and independence of the other and maintains its own.
2. Each communion agrees to admit members of the other communion to participate in the Sacraments.
3. Intercommunion does not require from either communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian Faith.

Following the ratification of intercommunion between the Episcopal Church in the United States of America and the Polish National Catholic Church of America, the Primates of each church appointed the following Committees to confer on questions arising from the new relationship.

COMMITTEE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH: The Rt. Rev. G. Ashton Oldham, Chairman, the Rt. Rev. Benjamin F. P. Ivins, the Rt. Rev. Austin Pardue, the Rev. Theodore Andrews, the Rev. William H. Dunphy, the Very Rev. Howard S. Kennedy, the Rev. Floyd W. Tomkins.

COMMITTEE OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH: The Rt. Rev. John Z. Jasinski, Chairman, the Rt. Rev. Leon Grochowski, the Rt. Rev. John Misiaszek, the Rev. Senior Rene Zawistowski, the Rev. Thaddeus F. Zielinski.

In introducing the principles upon which intercommunion is based, we shall be guided by this method: In essential matters, Unity. In non-essential matters, Freedom. In all things, Love.

